



February 17, 2000

The Honorable John M. Phillips  
Presiding Judge of the Coordinated Trial Courts  
Monterey County  
Post Office Box 414  
Salinas, California 93902

Subject: Response to the 1999 Grand Jury Final Report

Dear Judge Phillips:

This letter is in response to the 1999 Grand Jury Investigation concerning Salinas Valley landfill facilities. We appreciate the Grand Jury process and the role it plays in providing the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority (SVSWA) with an outside viewpoint of its operations. There are a few facts cited in the report that are in need of correction and these clarifications are included in the responses to the findings or recommendations.

### BACKGROUND

The SVSWA was formed in January 1997 as a Joint Powers Authority among the Cities of Salinas, Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, King City and Monterey County to efficiently manage the landfills in the Salinas Valley area and ensure long term landfill capacity for the region in a cost effective and environmentally sensitive manner. In December 1999, the SVSWA expanded its scope to provide assistance to all requesting member agencies in meeting the recycling goals of AB939. The Board of Directors for the SVSWA is composed of representatives from Monterey County and each of the member cities. In keeping with its mission and since its formation, the SVSWA has continued to make positive changes in the infrastructure and operations of its landfills and diversion activities.

### FINDINGS

***Finding 1. The Member Cities will not meet the recycling goals established by AB 939 by the end of the year 2000 unless immediate steps are taken.***

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Johnson Canyon Landfill • Lewis Road Landfill • Crazy Horse Canyon Landfill • Jolon Road Transfer Station • Hazardous Waste Facility, Salinas

The SVSWA agrees with this finding. The legislation AB 939 requires all cities and counties to meet the goal of 25% diversion by the end of 1995 and 50% by the end of 2000. The goals for the rural cities in South County have been adjusted to reflect the following:

	<u>2000 Goal</u>	<u>1998 "Actual"</u>
Greenfield	32.9%	11%
Gonzales	32.1%	-81%
King City	31.4%	-4%
Salinas	50%	15%
Soledad	50%	49%
Unincorporated County	50%	25%

The Authority knows the 1998 "actual" diversion figures to be incorrect due to inaccuracies in the CIWMB waste diversion calculation formula. In September 1999, the CIWMB concurred with this finding for Gonzales, Greenfield and King City.

***Finding 2. SVSWA is not responsible for waste reduction but, if requested, will assist the Member Cities in recycling.***

The SVSWA agrees with this finding.

***Finding 3. Citizens, businesses and growers within the SVSWA need incentives to reduce solid waste.***

The SVSWA partially agrees with this finding. SVSWA staff believes that incentives are one of several elements (e.g., education, supporting infrastructure, and materials outlets) necessary to foster waste reduction among residents, businesses, and growers.

***Finding 4. Agricultural industrial waste has increased. Wax-covered cardboard, field plastic and plastic packaging are difficult to recycle and typically remain in landfills.***

The SVSWA agrees with this finding.

***Finding 5. As of October 1, 1999 there is no incentive for growers to separate usable waste from green waste.***

The SVSWA disagrees partially with this finding. There are currently no reduced rates at the SVSWA landfills to encourage growers to separate materials before hauling to the landfill. However, the business incentives (cost savings) of diverting separated materials from the waste stream are present but not always easily recognized.

***Finding 6. In 1998 the amount of disposable waste generated by residents of the member cities of the SVSWA averaged 0.8 tons per person.***

The SVSWA disagrees partially with this finding. The SVSWA is uncertain how the Grand Jury arrived at this figure; however, the figure appears reasonable.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### ***Recommendation 1. Member Cities arrange with their respective waste collectors for weekly collection of green waste.***

Waste Management, Inc. currently provides weekly collection of residential green waste in King City and biweekly collection in Salinas. Gonzales, Greenfield and King City have weekly drop-off of green waste. The SVSWA has been empowered by the member cities to review their current service agreements and assess the efficacy and feasibility of expanding certain services including weekly, or other periodic, green waste collection at the curb.

### ***Recommendation 2. Member cites initiate plans with SVSWA to increase the type and amount of materials recycled.***

The SVSWA has developed a program called AB939 Enhanced Services, which includes the following services to its member agencies:

1. Reporting
  - Development of new base years and more accurate diversion figures.
  - Submittal of AB 939 Annual Reports for each city
  - Modification of the Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE)
  - Semi-annual reports to the member agencies
2. Commercial and Industrial Diversion
  - On-site waste assessments at selected businesses and development of programs to increase diversion for businesses
  - Markets development for difficult materials such as field plastic and wax cardboard
3. Public Education
  - Assist cities in developing or expanding in-house recycling programs
  - Develop broad-based public education program
  - Develop schools recycling programs and educational activities
4. Household Hazardous Waste Program
  - Operate four household hazardous waste sites
  - Operate two used oil collection points
  - Conduct rural one-day collection events
5. Increased Diversion at the Landfills
  - Develop landfill rate incentives to encourage delivery of targeted materials in a source-separated manner
  - Accept source-separated household recyclable for diversion
  - Develop materials recovery programs at selected landfills to recovery construction and demolition waste, green waste cardboard and other materials from uncompacted waste loads

6. Review and Enforce Franchise Agreements

- Evaluate existing franchise agreements to determine what areas can be improved upon
- Conduct performance audits of haulers' current services

***Recommendation 3. SVSWA contract with a private sector company to analyze randomly the contents of waste collection trucks at the landfills to determine the amount of recyclable goods.***

This recommendation has been implemented. A waste composition study targeting uncompacted waste delivered at SVSWA facilities was completed in October 1999 and is attached to this response.

***Recommendation 4. SVSWA contract with a private sector company to produce saleable compost***

This recommendation is in process of implementation. The green waste produced by Waste Management in Salinas and hauled to Crazy Horse landfill serves the beneficial use of alternative daily cover. The material at Johnson Canyon Road Landfill and Jolon Road Landfill is intended to be processed and marketed to a composter or used on -site for erosion control.

***Recommendation 5. SVSWA contract with a private sector company to utilize discarded concrete asphalt and base rock.***

The SVSWA will submit to its Board in February 2000 a contract with a local contractor to process accumulated Construction and Demolition material at Crazy Horse landfill. The processed material will then be sold for road base and the residual utilized at the landfill for road construction. A similar program is being planned for Johnson Canyon Road Landfill.

***Recommendation 6. SVSWA create incentives for the public businesses and growers to reduce landfill waste by increasing or decreasing fees, depending upon the material being discarded***

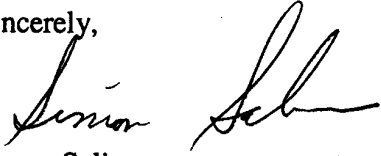
The SVSWA has initiated a program to analyze the cost of processing and marketing recyclable material (such as wood waste, green waste, appliances and metals) and expects to adjust tipping fees in late spring or early summer of 2000.

***Recommendation 7. Member Cities implement and initiate procedures for sale of recyclable items similar to the Environmental Park at the Marina Landfill, including the distribution at no charge, of discarded paint and household cleaning products***

The SVSWA has initiated at its household hazardous materials facility a program for no-cost redistribution of paint and household cleaning products. The SVSWA preferred approach is the diversion of recyclable materials before they reach the solid waste facilities rather than at a resale activity. As a result, the focus is at the source of waste generation, e.g., businesses, schools and residences.

The Board of Directors hopes that these responses provide clarification to the facts pertaining to the 1999 Grand Jury Final Report. We appreciate this opportunity to comment on the report and its findings. Should you have any questions regarding our response please call Stephen Johnson, Operations Manager for the Authority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Simon Salinas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Simon" and last name "Salinas" clearly distinguishable.

**Simon Salinas**  
**President of the Board**  
**Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority**

**Attachment: Waste Characterization Study, November 1999**